



28 November 2005



## Alcohol and Two More Senseless Soldier Deaths

1. Last week just before Thanksgiving, two USAREUR Soldiers died in alcohol-related accidents at or near bars where they were drinking. One was killed when he was hit by a car outside the establishment; the other died after falling down a flight of stairs inside. One was a sergeant first class. In terms of the Army's contemporary risk-management message, they didn't *own the edge*; they went over it.
2. Past Bell Sends messages recounted several senseless alcohol-related deaths. These tragedies, together with the bad incidents and "near misses" we have seen in the past few months, represent a very serious problem—one that demands our immediate, collective attention.
3. Society has determined that alcohol consumption—within limits—is legal and socially acceptable. However, the diminished situational awareness and reduced functional coordination associated with alcohol consumption make us vulnerable to making the same mistakes that led to the deaths of these two Soldiers. The bottom line is that alcohol kills!
4. While we may legally consume alcohol, we also have the moral responsibility to ensure that this consumption does not affect our well-being or the well-being of anyone else. If it does, we must ensure that we get help immediately. We have to be leaders, not observers. Never forget, we are defenders of freedom, executors of American policy, compassionate humanitarians, and proud warriors. *Drunk* is not the picture of an American Soldier that we want to portray, and *drunkenness* is not part of the Army Ethos.
5. Every community is staffed with counselors to help Soldiers who have problems with alcohol and to help commanders make referrals. If you have a problem, please do not hesitate to ask for help. Do not allow alcohol to diminish who you are, what you represent, and what you have accomplished. If you are a leader, then lead! We need ranks of clear-thinking individuals, off duty as well as on, so that we can continue to execute with excellence Any Mission, Anywhere!

B. B. BELL  
General, US Army  
Commanding

**ANY MISSION, ANYWHERE!**

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